



Durham Region Health Department FAX about...

For Health Care Professionals



Scabies

Lakeridge Health Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Hub has experienced an increased level of consultations regarding scabies. Scabies is an infestation of the skin by the parasitic itch mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*. The mites burrow into the upper layer of the skin where it lives and lays eggs. Symptoms of “[typical](#)” scabies include an intensely itchy skin rash. Common sites are between fingers, elbows, abdomen, buttocks, thighs, genital area. White curvy thread-like lines, tiny red bumps or scratch marks on skin are often the only sign of infestation. If left untreated and undiagnosed, typical scabies cases may lead to crusted scabies, especially in individuals with weakened immune systems.

Crusted (Norwegian) scabies presents as a crusty, scaly dermatitis usually of the hands and feet. Some may have generalized erythematous eruption. Itching may be minimal as compared to typical scabies and crusted scabies can be mistaken for psoriasis. Crusted scabies is highly contagious due to the large number of mites present. Transmission can occur through direct contact with an infected person, or their clothing, bedding or other fomites in their immediate environment.

Recommended actions for health care providers:

- Be alert for any pruritic skin lesions and consider scabies in the differential of any scaly rash
- Treatment is indicated for any person with scabies or their close contacts (e.g. household contact, intimate contacts, health care workers who did not wear PPE and performed direct care). Treatment with permethrin 5% cream (which is currently on backorder), or 5% lotion is indicated for most. In cases of crusted scabies or intolerance to permethrin, oral ivermectin can be used.
- Patients should be examined 2 and 4 weeks following treatment, which allows for original lesions to heal and any remaining eggs to hatch.
- Routine practices include gloves for skin contact for typical scabies, however contact precautions is required for crusted scabies. These precautions must be continued until 24 hours after application of scabicide for typical scabies and until resolution for crusted scabies.
- Access the PHO website for the [test information for scabies scrapings](#).

Scabies is **not** a reportable disease. However, if a congregate living setting (e.g. long-term care home, retirement home, other group living setting) is **experiencing many cases** linked by geographic proximity in the facility, temporal relationship to the onset of symptoms, or evidence of common source of exposure (i.e., shared caregiver), **contact Durham Region Health Department** to discuss IPAC outbreak measures.

- Phone: 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 ext. 7369 (press option 2)
- Confidential Fax: 905-666-1833

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

